

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: XX UN SU

SUBJ: NIMEIRI/AMBASSADOR TALK ON MIDEAST CRISIS

1. SUMMARY. PURSUANT RECOMMENDATION ARAB UN REPS, NIMEIRI CALLED ME IN EXPRESS HIS CONCERN LEST "FLOOD OF WEAPONS" INTO MIDEAST JEOPARDIZE CHANCES FOR PERMANENT PEACE. NIMEIRI'S REMARKS INCLUDE BOTH SOVIETS AS WELL AS OURSELVES, BUT HE IMPLIED ANY SOVIET RESUPPLY EFFORTS MIGHT EITHER BE EXAGGERATED BY PRESS OR DESIGNED TRAP USG (PRESUMABLY INTO MAJOR RESUPPLY EFFORT OF ITS OWN). PRESIDENT'S LOW-KEY APPROACH AVOIDED ANY SORT OF THREAT AND WAS OBVIOUSLY DESIGNED MAKE POSSIBLE PUBLIC GOS POSTURE OF COMMON ACTION WITH OTHER ARABS. IN FACT, HE CLEARLY WORRIED LEST EVENTS FORCE HIM INTO INCREASINGLY ANTI-USG STANCE WHICH HE HOPES AVOID. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENT NIMEIRI SUMMONED ME AT 11 AM OCT 13 TO DISCUSS MIDEAST CRISIS. ACTG FONMIN UMAR AL-HAJ MUSA AND MINSTATE/PRESIDENTIAL AFFAIRS SALAH ABDEL AAL MABROUK ALSO PRESENT.

3. GREETING ME CORDIALLY, NIMEIRI BEGAN BY RECALLING GOS DEDICATION TO PEACE IN AFRICA AND MIDEAST. UNFORTUNATELY, PRIOR OCT 4 THERE HAD NOT BEEN PEACE BUT "FRAGILE
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SITUATION" BETWEEN ARABS AND ISRAELIS. WERE CURRENT CRISIS TO CONTINUE AND "FLOOD OF WEAPONS" ENTER AREA FROM OUTSIDE, ONLY RESULT WOULD BE TO CREATE ANOTHER "FRAGILE SITUATION" WHICH IN DUE COURSE WOULD PRODUCE ANOTHER

CRISIS. ARMS RESUPPLY EFFORTS WOULD NOT BRING PEACE. NIMEIRI NOTED HE MAKING THIS APPROACH AT SUGGESTION ARAB UN DELEGATIONS AND WISHED ME REPORT HIS CONCERN TO WASHINGTON.

4. NIMEIRI CANDIDLY ADMITTED GOS WISHED REMAIN "FRIENDS" WITH USG BUT WAS BEING FORCED BY EVENTS PUBLICLY ESPOUSE ARAB POSITIONS. HE URGED US AVOID ACTIONS WHICH HAVE EFFECT PUSHING SUDAN AND OTHER FRIENDLY ARAB STATES EVEN FURTHER IN DIRECTION HARD ARAB POSITION.

5. AGREEING REPORT HIS VIEWS IMMEDIATELY, I SAID USG ASSESSMENT SITUATION NOT FAR APART FROM HIS OWN. CRISIS WAS SERIOUS. WE, LIKE SUDAN, EARNESTLY HOPED HOSTILITIES COULD BE ENDED PROMPTLY IN MANNER CONDUCIVE TO PERMANENT SETTLEMENT OF BASIC PROBLEM WHICH WOULD BE FAIR TO BOTH SIDES. I WENT OVER FOR HIM SECY'S BALANCED AND CONSTRUCTIVE COMMENTS AT OCT 12 PRESS CONFERENCE. STRESSED THAT, WHILE CERTAIN SOVIET ACTIONS RECENT DAYS WORRIED US, WE HAD NOT YET DETERMINED USSR ACTING IRRESPONSIBLY. I WARNED NIMEIRI, HOWEVER, WE COULD BE DRIVEN INTO CORNER WHICH MIGHT LEAVE US NO ALTERNATIVE TAKING ACTIONS WHICH MIGHT DISPLEASE ARABS AND WHICH WE WOULD EARNESTLY HOPE AVOID. EVER SINCE ERUPTION HOSTILITIES, USG POLICY HAD BEEN DIRECTED AT ENDING THE FIGHTING AND GETTING A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE SETTLEMENT. WE HAD BEEN IN CLOSE TOUCH PARTIES AS WELL AS PERMANENT MEMBERS UNSC. SECRETARY HIMSELF HAD NOTED OUR DESIRE SITUATION WOULD EVOLVE IN MANNER PERMIT US MAINTAIN THESE CONTACTS AFTER FIGHTING OVER. NIMEIRI SAID HE SINCERELY HOPED OUR EFFORTS ARRANGE PEACE WOULD SUCCEED. I COUNTERED THAT USG HARDLY DISPOSED UNLIMITED INFLUENCE AND NEEDED ALL HELP WE COULD GET FROM FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS SUCH AS SUDAN, NOT ONLY DIRECTLY BUT AT SECURITY COUNCIL WHERE HIS FONMIN NOW WAS. NIMEIRI SAID HE HAD BEEN IN TELEPHONIC TOUCH FONMIN LATE OCT 12 AND HAD INSTRUCTED HIM DO ALL HE COULD "WORK FOR PEACE".

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6. I TOOK OCCASION EMPHASIZE TO NIMEIRI IMPORTANCE ALL SIDES ACTING RESPONSIBLY AND AVOIDING PUBLICITY WHICH COULD ONLY INFLAME POPULAR OPINION IN AREA, THUS COMPLICATING ALL OUR EFFORTS CONTROL SITUATION. THIS CONNECTION, I DREW HIS ATTENTION MENA ALLEGATION US PLANES STRAFING EGYPTIAN POSITIONS. CATEGORICALLY DENYING THIS CANARD, I LET HIM READ STATE 202319 (UNCLAS). NIMEIRI EXPRESSED INTEREST AND ASKED IF ACTG FONMIN COULD RETAIN COPY, TO WHICH I AGREED. PRESIDENT THEN STATED HE FULLY CONCURRED DESIRABILITY ACTING RESPONSIBLY AND ASSURED ME HIS GOVT CONTINUED HAVE THIS OBJECTIVE VERY MUCH IN MIND.

7. ON DEPARTURE, ACTG FONMIN MUSA SHOWED ME TELEGRAM

FROM FONMIN KHALID NEW YORK IN WHICH ARABS HAD RECOMMENDED DEMARCHE RE ARMS RESUPPLY. SOMEWHAT APOLOGETICALLY, HE INDICATED GOS HAD TO KEEP IN STEP WITH OTHER ARABS AND THEN COMPLAINED "LIBYANS AND PALESTINIANS ARE ON OUR NECKS ALL THE TIME". MUSA CLAIMED PRESIDENT NIMEIRI FULLY FAMILAR SOVIETS AND "HATES THEM". HOWEVER, HE HAD TOLD MUSA HE CONCERNED LEST USSR BY ITS ACTIONS IN CRISIS SEEK PUT USG ON SPOT AT LITTLE RISK TO THEMSLEVES. MUSA ADDED HE KNEW PRESS AND DIPLOMATIC SOURCES REPORTING SOVIET ARMS RESUPPLY OPERATIONS BUT HE WONDERED HOW MUCH FIRE EXISTED BENEATH SMOKE. I ASSURED MUSA WE WERE WATCHING SITUATION EXTREMELY CLOSELY AND HAD MEANS INFORMING OURSELVES WHAT SOVS MIGHT BE UP TO. AS SECY HAD MADE CLEAR, WE HOPED EXERCISE RESTRAINT IF USSR DID NOT ACT IRRESPONSIBLY.

8. COMMENT: NIMEIRI'S APPROACH COUCHED IN FRIENDLY TERMS WITH AVOIDANCE THREATENING OVERTONES. HE CLEARLY REGARDED IT AS PRO FORMA EXERCISE IN ORDER PERMIT GOS SAY PUBLICLY IT HAD "PROTESTED" TO USG RE ARMS RESUPPLY. (PRESS PHOTOS TAKEN PRIOR INTERVIEW WILL NO DOUBT BE FEATURED OCT 14 PRESS). NIMEIRI'S ACTUAL CONCERN IS THAT USG ARMS RESUPPLY MAY FORCE HIM INTO UNCOMPROMISING ANTI-USG POSITION WHICH HE WOULD HOPE AVOID.

9. ACTION REQUESTED: WOULD APPRECIATE AUTHORITATIVE RESPONSE, INCLUDING APPROPRIATE PARTICULARS SOVIET RESUPPLY EFFORTS, WHICH I MAY USE WITH NIMEIRI IN ORDER KEEP DIALOGUE
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OPEN HERE. THIS CONNECTION, I DID NOT REPEAT NOT SUGGEST HE ALSO APPROACH SOVIETS SINCE (A) GOS/USSR RELATIONS POOR; AND (B) SOV AMB HAS BEEN ABSENT HERE SEVERAL MONTHS.
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